# Coins and Computers
# NEWSLETTER

No. 1, June 1993

**COINS AND COMPUTERS NEWSLETTER**

This is the first issue of what is intended to be a semi-annual newsletter published in the spring and at the end of the year. The aim is provide information to all interested in numismatics who are also working with computers. The name of the newsletter has been chosen for convenience only and it will encompass all branches of numismatics: coins, banknotes, medals, tokens etc. from ancient Greece to modern times.

We envision a wide selection of subjects, but also regular topics which could include the following:

Past and future conferences
Reports from museums/institutions on their work
Current projects
Debate
Hints on how to arrange a database structure etc.
Questions and answers
Publications

CCN (the acronym for the newsletter) depends upon reader contributions to fulfill its purpose.

CCN is currently supplied free of charge. This issue is distributed to all INC/CIN members and others interested, but **future issues of CCN will only be supplied to those who have expressed an interest in continuing to receive it. See subscription form at the back.**

In order to facilitate publication we ask that contributions be delivered on disk to one of the editors as an ASCII, Wordperfect or Pagemaker file. The present editors regret that they can only use disks operating under the MS-DOS system. However, contributions can also be delivered typed on paper. Contributions are accepted in English, French, and German. We

International Numismatic Commission/Commission Internationale de Numismatique
Internationale Numismatische Kommission

EDITORS
William E. Metcalf, The American Numismatic Society, Broadway at 155th Street, New York, NY 10032, USA. Tel. +1-212-234 3130. Fax: + 1 - 212 - 234 3381
Kenneth Jonsson, Numismatic Institute, c/o Riksantikvarieämbetet, Box 5405, S-114 84 Stockholm, Sweden. Tel. +46-8-783 94 41. Fax: + 46-8-662 17 68

cannot accept papers which are longer than a few pages in print.

## COMPUTER SURVEY

A questionnaire has been sent to more than 100 museums and institutions asking for information about databases. So far only 43 replies from 21 countries have been received and we ask all who have not yet replied to do so as soon as possible and not later than 1 September. **A copy of the questionnaire is being sent with this issue to all who have not replied or who have not received it earlier.** The questionnaire is not distributed to numismatic societies unless specifically requested for. A more detailed presentation of the replies will be published in the next issue of CCN, which will also include a listing of all who have replied as well as those who have not replied.

In this issue only some basic results will be presented based on the replies received so far.

*Countries*

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Austria | 2 | France | 2 | Japan | 1 | Spain | 3 |
| Belgium | 2 | Germany | 9 | Luxemburg | 1 | Sweden | 3 |
| Canada | 1 | Greece | 1 | Netherlands | 3 | Switzerland | 1 |
| Denmark | 1 | Hungary | 1 | Norway | 1 | Taiwan | 1 |
| England | 4 | Italy | 1 | Slovenia | 1 | USA | 3 |
| Estonia | 1 | | | | | | |

*Operating systems* (some use more than one system)

| MS-DOS | Macintosh | OS/2 | Primos | Unix |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 29 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 2 |

*Database programs* (some use more than one system)

| Dbase | FileMaker | ImageDB | Paradox | Others (15 different) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 each |

*Number of records in databases* (many have only just started or plan to start in the near future)

| 1-9,999 | 10,000-49,999 | 50,000-99,999 | >100,000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 22 | 5 | 1 | 3 |

## CONFERENCES

19-20 November 1993, Isegran. The University Coin Cabinet, Oslo will arrange a conference "Data og numismatikk" at Isegran with participants from the Nordic countries. Topics will include reports on experience from work done so far and future cooperation between institutions. A publication is anticipated after the conference.

Spring 1994. Historical department, University of Rome will be one of the organizers of a conference in Rome as part of a wider theme which includes coins.

October 1994, Taipei. National Museum of History. Multi-media guided system.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: When I have several identical items to record do I need to write all information over and over again?

A: In some programs you can choose "Copy (record)" from the menu to get a duplicate record. In dBase you type "set carry on" at the dot prompt. Every new record will then automatically repeat all the information in the previous record and you only have to change e.g. the weight. When you want to stop repeating records just type "set carry off" at the dot prompt. For other programs where this information is not easily found in the manual we hope that readers can supply the editors with information which can be included in a future issue of CCN.

## HINTS ON HOW TO ARRANGE A DATABASE STRUCTURE

Numerical records in a database demands accurate figures which it is not always possible to provide. For example if the last digit of the date on a coin is not legible you still have to enter a digit. One possibility is to ad an extra character field (named "X" or whatever is suitable) after the date field. In this field, which only needs to contain one or two positions, you can enter a questionmark, "c." for circa, or "*" for an estimated date etc. If you can narrow down the date to say the period 1649-72 you simply write 1649 in the date field and 72 in the "X" field. Another way is to use decimal points, where each decimal point has a certain meaning or provide the latest possible date.

## NUMISMATIC INSTITUTE, STOCKHOLM

Adress: c/o Riksantikvarieämbetet, Box 5405, S-114 84 Stockholm, Sweden.
Tel. +46-8-783 94 28. Fax. +46-8-662 17 68.

The Numismatic Institute is attatched to the archaeological department at Stockholm University. Computers have been used since 1987. Operating system is MS-DOS 5.0. Windows 3.1 is used and the computers are 386 and 486 models with 120-650 MB hard disks.

Main activities are research and education and computers are used extensively in both areas. The staff consists of Kenneth Jonsson (professor), Gert Rispling (antiquarian), Wivianne Runske (part-time secretary), and Brita Malmer (professor emerita). The institute has a numismatic library, but it does not have a collection of coins.

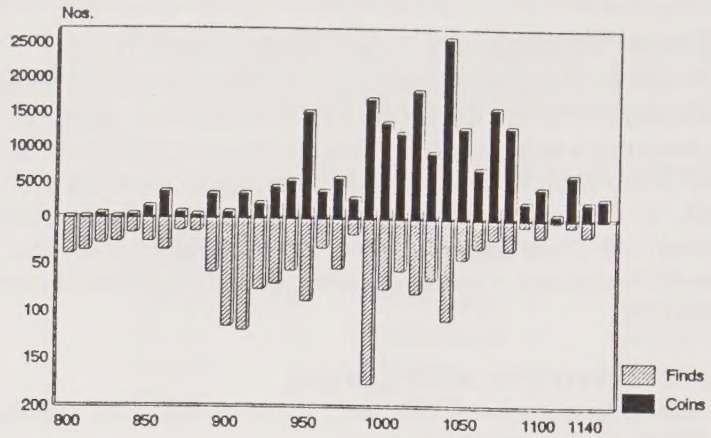
Research is at present concentrated to Viking-Age (800-1100) and Medieval (1100-1500) coins (in a continental perspective both periods fall within the Middle Ages), but it will also include earlier as well as later coins in the future. A joint project (*CNS* series) aims to publish all Viking-Age coins found in Sweden (223,000 coins from 2,300 finds), where Arabic (65,500), German (93,300), and English (41,500) coins are the three major elements. Eight out of an expected 35 volumes have been published so far. The majority of the coins are still available for study in Kungl. Myntkabinettet, Stockholm and in other museums, or archival lists with a varying degree of detail exist. The coins are recorded in a database where video photos can be included and the database is used for preparing pages and plates for printing using a desktop program. Extensive databases are being built as a tool for research and for example to help identify fragments.

All of northern Europe (the Nordic countries, former East Germany, Poland, the Baltic countries, and Russia) have similar finds during the Viking-Age and databases also include hoards/coins in these countries. All in all there are more than 5,500 finds with *c.* 700,000 coins from northern Europe in this period.

As a parallel to *CNS* a series of monographs (*Commentationes*) is published covering different subjects within Viking-Age coinage. So far five volumes have been published. For all

three volumes which are presently in proof stage computers are used to produce camera ready pages.

For the Middle Ages the databases so far are limited, but they are likely to grow rapidly in the future. Databases covering medieval coins and hoards are confined to Scandinavia and the Baltic countries.




*Number of coins and number of finds from Sweden in the period 800s-1140s based on t.p.q.*

The databases stress basic information as ruler, type, mint, date, moneyer, weight, and information about find provenance, but they do not include e.g. legends.

A summary of database records is given below.

| *Subject* | *Area* | *Period* | *No. of records* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Coins | Islamic world | Viking Age | 28,000 |
| | Islamic world | Middle Ages | 22,000 |
| | Germany | Viking Age | 15,500 |
| | England | Viking Age | 24,000 |
| | Miscellaneous | Middle Ages | 4,000 |
| Hoards | Sweden | Viking Age and Middle Ages | 2,400 |
| | Europe | Viking Age | 2,700 |
| Miscellaneous | Europe | Types, moneyers etc. | 2,400 |

The total number of records in the various databases number just over 100,000 with an expected annual increase of 20,000 records. Database programs in use are dBase IV and ImageDB.

Students in archaeology use computers to write seminar papers about European and Oriental Viking-Age and Medieval coins with an emphasis on Scandinavia, Germany, England, and the Caliphate. Each student has so far recorded from 300 to 2,200 coins on computer depending on the subject. The extensive hoard material offers a vast potential for research especially in the Viking-Age period, both when attributions, chronology, and structure of the coinage is

concerned. The results are presented in seminar papers which, after editing, will be published in a new report series. One student will commence a four year scholarship in September 1993 and write about the structure of coin circulation in the West Slav region in the Viking Age and contacts with Sweden.

Besides database programs we use programs for word processing, desktop, calculation, and graphics.

Kenneth Jonsson

**EDITORIAL SECTION**

Contributions to CNN should be delivered to one of the editors as ASCII, Wordperfect or Pagemaker files on disk. The present editors regret that they can only use disk operating under the MS-DOS system. However, contributions can also be delivered typed on paper. Contributions are accepted in English, French, and German. Proofs are not sent to the contributors. Deadline for contributions are 1 April and 1 November. Illustrations are preferably limited to line drawings because we use a simple copying machine to "print" CCN.

At present we have no manuscripts waiting to be included in the next issue. Thus we urge readers who have information, comments or questions to contribute which could be of interest to others to send it to us. Reports on computer activities at museums, institutions etc. are also wellcome.

**If you wish to receive CCN in the future fill out the subscription form at the back. Those who have already indicated in the questionnaire that they which to receive information in the future do not need to fill out the form.**

SUBSCRIPTION FORM TO BE SENT TO THE EDITORS

**Yes, I/we want to receive CCN in the future**

Name: .....
Museum/institution: .....
.....
Street: .....
Town: .....
Country: .....
Telephone: .....
Fax: .....
Modem: .....
☐ I want to receive the questionnaire about databases

CONFERENCE FORM TO BE SENT TO THE EDITORS

**I/we plan to arrange a conference**

Contact person: .....
Museum/institution: .....
.....
Telephone: .....
Fax: .....
Subject(s): .....
.....
Number of participants: .....
Location: .....
Date: .....
Costs: .....
Open to all interested? ☐ Yes ☐ No